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The 18th & 19th Centuries, The Female, & History

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The 42nd Avenue Elementary School

Good

LA BELLE ASSEMBLÉE,

FOR MARCH, 1830.

ILLUSTRATIVE MEMOIR OF THE RIGHT HON. CECIL FRANCES HAMILTON, COUNTESS OF WICKLOW.

LADY CECIL FRANCES HAMILTON, married to the Right Honourable William Howard, Earl of Wicklow (then Lord Clonmore), on the 16th of February, 1816, is the daughter of John James, late Marquess of Abercorn, by his second Countess, and cousin, Cecil Hamilton, daughter of the Hon. and Rev. George Hamilton; consequently, her Ladyship is, on both sides, a descendant of the ancient and illustrious house of Hamilton, of which her father was the chief representative in the male line. In former times, the Hamiltons frequently intermarried with the royal family of Scotland, and were acknowledged by the parliament of that country, as the presumptive heirs to the crown. Indeed the wide-spreading family of Hamilton may vie with any other in Europe, for antiquity and dignity. Its name was originally assumed from the manor of Hambledon, otherwise Hamilton, in the hundred of East Goscote, in the county of Leicester, the inheritance of the old Earls of Leicester, from whose grant the Hamiltons possessed those lands. In gratitude to their benefactors, they bore, for their coat armour, *gules, three cinquefoils, ermine*; the single cinquefoil being the paternal coat of the Earls of Meullant (or Mellent) in Normandy; and they are both placed together in St. Mary's

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church, Leicester, which city had also the arms it bears from the family of Leicester.

The descent of the Hamiltons is distinctly traced to Bernard, near kinsman to Rollo, first Duke of Normandy, who, on the decease of that Duke, was appointed governor to his son, Duke William, surnamed *Longue Espée*, who, at his baptism, changed his name to Robert, and governed the duchy during the minority of his charge. Robert's great grandson, Roger de Bellamont (commonly called Beaumont) who gave name to the town of Beaumont le Roger, in Normandy, was one of the council that persuaded the Norman Duke to invade England; he and his two sons accompanied him in his fortunate expedition; and he afterwards subdued Malcolm III., King of Scotland, and compelled him to do homage to the Conqueror. His wife was Adelina, daughter of Waleranus, Earl of Mellent, sister and heir of Hugh, Earl of Mellent: his sons were Robert, his successor, created Earl of Leicester; and Henry, surnamed de Newburgh, created Earl of Warwick, in 1076. Robert, the elder son, commanded the right wing of the Duke of Normandy's army in the battle of Hastings: he valiantly broke in upon the enemy; and, for his great services, he afterwards obtained from the Conqueror no fewer than

ninety-one lordships and manors in the counties of Warwick, Leicester, Wilts, Northampton, and Gloucester.

William, the founder of the illustrious house of Hamilton (surnamed de Hamilton, from the place of his birth), was the third son of Robert, third Earl of Leicester, surnamed de Blanches Mains, by his wife, Petronilla, daughter and heir of Hugh de Grandmesnil, Lord of Hinckley, and Great Steward of England. About the year 1215, he went into Scotland, to visit his sister, the Countess of Winchester, and there married Mary, the only daughter and heir of Gilbert, Earl of Strathern. His son, Sir Gilbert Hamilton, was the first of the family that settled in Scotland. He obtained from Alexander II., King of Scotland, a considerable grant of lands; and he married Isabella, daughter of Sir James Randolph, of Strathdon, and sister to Thomas (created Earl of Murray, in 1321, by his uncle, King Robert Bruce) Lord Chancellor of Scotland, and governor of that kingdom in the reign of David II. From his eldest son, Sir Walter, descended, in the third generation,

Sir James Hamilton, of Cadzow, first Lord Hamilton. He was sent into England, in 1423, as one of the hostages for the payment of 40,000 marks, for the ransom of King James I., by whom he was afterwards knighted, and also, in 1445, entered amongst the lords. His son and successor,

James, second Lord Hamilton, was a person of remarkable courage and conduct, which he frequently manifested, particularly at Abercorn, and was in high esteem with King James III. In consideration of his excellent qualities, and in recompense of his eminent services, His Majesty was pleased, in 1474, to give him in marriage his eldest sister, Mary, the widow of Thomas Boyde, Earl of Arran. His son,*

James, third Lord Hamilton, and first Earl of Arran, was, in 1502, sent into

* His only daughter, Elizabeth, was married to Matthew Stewart, Earl of Lenox; and by him she was great grandmother of Henry, Lord Darnley, Duke of Albany, who, marrying Mary Queen of Scots, in 1564, had a son, James, the first King of the whole Island of Great Britain, by the title of James VI. of Scotland, and I. of England.

England, to negotiate a marriage between King James IV. and the Princess Margaret, eldest daughter of Henry VII. It was for his successful conclusion of this treaty, by solemnizing the nuptials with great magnificence, that his master bestowed on him the Isle of Arran, and created him Earl thereof, by patent dated August 10, 1503. He was employed in many important services, military and civil, at home and on the continent. On the death of James IV. at the battle of Flodden Field, he stood fair to be elected Regent; but he generously yielded his pretensions to his cousin-german, John Stewart, Duke of Albany, son of Duke Alexander, brother of James III., and was himself made Captain and Governor of Edinburgh Castle. On the Duke's voyage to France, in 1517, he was appointed one of the six guardians of the realm; and, by his colleagues, he was unanimously chosen *Primus*, and Warden of the Marches. Thus the entire authority devolved upon his Lordship; he continued sole Regent during the Duke's absence; and, within that period, he concluded a peace with England, suppressed several insurrections, preserved regularity upon the borders, restored peace and quiet to the whole country, and discharged the duties of his high office with such universal credit, that, upon the Duke's second voyage into France, he was again constituted Regent, and, for the faithful and able conduct of the government, was again honoured with the fullest approbation. His eldest son and successor,

James, second Earl of Arran, was one of the attendants on King James V. on his voyage to France to marry Magdalene, daughter of King Francis I. On the death of his sovereign, in 1542, he was, by the unanimous consent of Parliament, chosen Protector to Queen Mary, then only six days old, and Governor of Scotland. This appointment was solemnly ratified by an act of the three estates, in which he was declared second person of the realm, and nearest to succeed to the crown on failure of the Queen and her issue: further, he was declared rightful tutor to the Queen, and Governor of the Kingdom, till she should arrive at perfect age; and all her subjects were required to acknowledge and

obey him as sole Regent, in all things belonging to his office.—This act, engrossed on parchment, with the great seal, and the seals of the nobility, prelates, and burghs, appended thereto, is yet preserved in the family of the Duke of Hamilton.

In the subsequent war between England and Scotland, which arose out of the failure of Henry VIII. to ratify the treaty for a marriage between his son, Prince Edward, and the Scottish Queen, the Earl of Arran was actively engaged. Afterwards, he commenced, and successfully concluded, a treaty of marriage between Queen Mary and Francis, the Dauphin, son of Henry II. of France. In consideration of this service, that king created his lordship Duke of Chatelherault; and, for the support of the honour, assigned to him and his heirs for ever lands of 30,000 livres a-year. His unshaken loyalty to Queen Mary, in the time of her greatest distress, was frequently acknowledged by Her Majesty, who constantly called him father, as her son did his son. In 1571, in a Parliament called at Stirling, by Matthew Stewart, Earl of Lenox, Regent, and grandfather to the young king, he and his sons were declared rebels, and their estates forfeited; but, by the treaty of Perth, confirmed at Edinburgh, in 1573, they were restored to their honours and possessions.—This nobleman married Lady Margaret Douglas, eldest daughter of James, fourth Earl of Morton, by Catherine his wife, natural daughter of James IV. He was succeeded, in 1575, by his eldest son,

James, third Earl of Arran, Captain of the Life Guard to Henry II. of France. Dying without issue, his successor was his next brother,

John, fourth Earl of Arran, and first Marquess of Hamilton—so created in 1599—the first in Scotland who ever bore that dignity. This nobleman was ancestor of the Dukes of Hamilton. When sentence of death was passed upon his royal mistress, Queen Mary, in England, she pulled a ring off her finger, and ordered one of her servants to deliver it to her cousin, Lord John Hamilton, as a token of the just sense she entertained of his constant fidelity, and sufferings for her interest. This ring—a precious relic

—is still preserved in the Duke's family.

The Marquess's next brother,

Claude, created Baron of Paisley, in 1585, was ancestor of the Marquess of Abercorn; and, the male line of the ducal branch having failed, the Marquess is now the chief representative of the house of Hamilton. Lord Paisley married Margaret, daughter of George, Lord Seton. His eldest son was,

James, created Baron of Abercorn, in 1604; in 1606, Earl of Abercorn, and Baron of Hamilton, Mount-Castle, and Kilpatrick. He was Lord of the King's Bedchamber to James I.; and, in 1613, he was called to the Irish parliament, as Earl of Abercorn. Two years afterwards, he was appointed of the council of the province of Munster; and he obtained a large grant of lands in the barony of Strabane, on which he built a strong castle, a church, school-house, &c. He married Marianna, daughter of Thomas, Lord Boyde, ancestor of the Earl of Kilmarnock. Dying before his father, he was succeeded by his eldest son,

James (afterwards second Earl of Abercorn) created Baron of Strabane, in 1616, with limitation of the honours to the heirs male of his father, the Earl of Abercorn. By permission, however, of Charles I. the honour of Strabane was resigned to his next brother, Claude, in 1634. The successor of James, the second Earl (by his wife, Catherine, daughter and heir of Gervais Clifton, Lord Clifton, of Leighton Bromswold) was his third, but eldest surviving son,

George, third Earl of Abercorn, who died unmarried. Male issue failing successively in Claude and William, second and third sons of James, the first Earl, Sir George, the fourth son, a Baronet of Nova Scotia, became ancestor of the present Marquess of Abercorn. He married Mary, daughter of Thomas, Viscount Thurles, eldest son of Walter, eleventh Earl of Ormond, and sister of James, first Duke of Ormond. His eldest son,

James, Groom of the Bedchamber to Charles II., with whom he stood high in favour, married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of John, Lord Culpepper, of Thorsway; and, by that lady, who was maid of honour to Mary, Princess of Orange, mother of King William III., he had six

sons, of whom only three survived their infancy. Of these, the eldest was

James, sixth Earl of Abercorn, created Viscount Strabane and Baron of Mount Castle, in 1701. He succeeded his father, as Groom of the Bedchamber to Charles II.; afterwards, was a privy councillor, and colonel of a regiment of horse, to James II.; but, perceiving that prince's intention to introduce popery, he fought on the side of King William, and particularly distinguished himself at the celebrated siege of Londonderry. His Lordship married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir Robert Reading, of Dublin, Bart. (by Jane, widow of Charles, Earl of Mountrath). Of a numerous family, the eldest surviving son was

James, seventh Earl of Abercorn, F.R.S., a privy councillor in England and Ireland, &c. His successor (by his wife, Anne, eldest daughter of John Plumer, of Blakesware, in the county of Herts, Esq.) was

James, eighth Earl of Abercorn, who was summoned to the House of Peers, in Ireland, in his father's life-time, as Lord Mount-Castle. He was created a peer of Great Britain on the 24th of August, 1786, by the title of Viscount Hamilton, of Hamilton, in the county of Leicester, with remainder to his nephew, John James, only son of John, the second son of the seventh Earl, by his wife Harriet, daughter of James Craggs, Esq., Secretary of State to George I. (widow of Richard Eliot, of Port Eliot, in the county of Cornwall, Esq., and mother of the first Lord Eliot). Dying unmarried on the 9th of October, 1789, he was accordingly succeeded by his nephew,

John James, K.G., ninth Earl and first Marquess of Abercorn. His Lordship—raised to the Marquisate on the 15th of October, 1790—married, *first*, in 1779, Catherine, daughter of Sir Joseph Copley, of Sprotborough, in the county of York, Bart.;* *secondly*, in 1792, his cousin, Cecil

Hamilton, eighth daughter of the Hon. George Hamilton, Canon of Windsor, fourth son of James, the seventh Earl; *thirdly*, in 1810, the Lady Anne Jane, eldest daughter of Arthur Gore, second Earl of Arran, K.P. (by Catherine, only daughter of William Annesley, Viscount Glerawley) and widow of Henry Hatton, of Great Clonard, in the county of Wexford, Esq. His Lordship died on the 27th of January, 1818, and was succeeded by his grandson, James, present and second Marquess of Abercorn.

It was by his second lady that the late Marquess had an only daughter, *Cecil Frances Hamilton, now Countess of Wicklow*.

Having thus traced, as briefly as possible—for to do it justice would require volumes—the descent of the house of Hamilton, in its chief line, we must turn, for a few moments, to that of Howard, in which rests the Earldom of Wicklow.

This branch of the Howards, though of English extraction, has been, for several centuries, settled at Shelton Abbey, in the county of Wicklow. Robert Howard, Bishop of Elphin, succeeded to the family estate, in 1728, on the death of his elder brother, Hugh Howard, of Shelton, Esq. He married Patience, daughter and sole heiress of Godfrey Bolcyn, of Fennor, in the county of Meath, Esq., a descendant from the Boleyns, of Bloxall, in Suffolk. His eldest son, by this lady, was,

Ralph, first Baron Clonmore, and Viscount Wicklow. He represented the county of Wicklow in Parliament; was sworn of the Privy Council, in 1770; created Baron Clonmore, of Clonmore Castle, in the county of Carlow, on the 21st of July, 1778; and advanced to the dignity of Viscount Wicklow, on the 23d of June, 1785. His Lordship married, in 1755, Alice, sole heiress of William Forward, of Castle Forward, in the county of Donegal, Esq., M.P.; and by that lady—who

* By this lady, the Marquess had a family of five children. His eldest son, James, Viscount Hamilton, married, in 1809, Harriet, daughter of the Hon. John Douglas, son of James, fifteenth Earl of Morton, by whom he had:—James, the present Marquess, born in 1811; Harriet, born in 1812; and Claude, born in 1813. This young nobleman died in the life-

time of his father; and his widow, Lady Hamilton, married, in 1815, the Right Hon. George, present Earl of Aberdeen, K.T., &c. The other children of the late Marquess, were:—Claude, died at Madeira, in 1808; Harriet, deceased; Catherine Elizabeth, married, in 1805, to George, present Earl of Aberdeen, died in 1812; and Maria, died unmarried, in 1814.

was, on the 20th of December, 1793, created Countess of Wicklow, in her own right, with remainder to her issue male—he had a family of eleven children:—

1. Robert;—2. William;—3. John, died in 1778;—4. Hugh, Governor of the county of Wicklow, a Commissioner of the Stamp Office, and Colonel of the Wicklow militia, married, in 1792, Catherine, second daughter of Robert Bligh, Dean of Elphin, and niece of John Bligh, first Earl of Darnley;—5. Ralph, died young;—6. Boleyn, in holy orders;—7. Henry, killed in an engagement with the French, in Flanders;—8. Stuarta, died unmarried, in 1823;—9. Isabella, died in 1784;—10. Catherine;—11. Mary, married to the Rev. Thomas Hoare, third son of Walter Hoare, of Harper's Town, in the county of Wexford, Esq. (by Anne Stopford, daughter of James, first Earl of Courtown) died in 1793.

The Viscount died in 1788, and was succeeded by his eldest son,

Robert, second Viscount Wicklow, who also succeeded his mother in the Earldom, in 1807. Dying unmarried, in 1815, he was succeeded by his next brother,

William, who, on coming to the estates of his maternal ancestors, had assumed the name and arms of Forward. After his accession to the Earldom, however, he obtained His Majesty's licence to resume the name of Howard. He married,

in 1787, Eleanor, only daughter of the Hon. Francis Caulfield (by Mary, only daughter of John, Lord Eyre), and niece of James, first Earl of Charlemont, K.P. By her he had—

1. William, present Earl of Wicklow;—2. Francis;—3. Robert;—4. Isabella, married, in 1815, to William M. Smythe, of Barbaville, in the county of Westmeath, Esq.;—5. Eleanor, married, in 1816, to J. F. Featherstone, of Bracklyn Castle, in the county of Westmeath, Esq.;—6. Caroline, died an infant;—7. Mary, married, in 1822, to the Rev. James William Arnold;—8. Alicia.

His Lordship died on the 27th of September, 1818, and was succeeded by his eldest son,

The Right Hon. William Howard, present Earl of Wicklow; Viscount Wicklow; Baron Clonmore, of Clonmore Castle; Governor of the county of Wicklow; and Colonel of the Militia for that county. His Lordship married, on the 16th of February, 1816, the Lady Cecil Frances Hamilton, daughter of the Most Noble, John, first Marquess of Abercorn, K.G.; by whom he has five daughters: the first, born on the 26th of April, 1817; the second, on the 16th of February, 1820; the third, on the 26th of July, 1821; the fourth, on the 10th of December, 1824; the fifth, on the 29th of September, 1827.